

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 H-02 INR-07 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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DRAFTED BY PM/DCA:HDCAMITTA:ILB

APPROVED BY PM - MR. VEST

S/S - FORTIZ

C - MR. KELLY

INR/STA - MR. SAVITT

S/P - MR. ZEMACH

H - MR. JENKINS

----- 087710

O 220106Z JAN 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - RESPONSE TO SYMINGTON

SALT LETTER (S/S NO. 7601328)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM VEST THRU SONNENFELDT

1. SENATOR SYMINGTON WROTE YOU ON JANUARY 15 CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE TRADE OFF BETWEEN CRUISE MISSILE RANGE AND BACKFIRE LIMITATIONS (LETTER AT PARA 5). HE NOTES THAT CRUISE MISSILES CAN BE BUILT AT A SMALL FRACTION OF THE COST OF A MANNED BOMBER AND QUESTIONS THE ABILITY TO ACCURATELY VERIFY CRUISE MISSILE RANGES. WITH RESPECT TO BACKFIRE, HE STATES THAT WITHOUT REFUELING OR ONE-WAY MISSIONS, IT IS NOT AN INTERCONTINENTAL BOMBER AS THE TERM IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD AND IT FACES GROWING DANGER OF DESTRUCTION FROM MISSILES OF MANY TYPES. IN CONCLUSION,
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SYMINGTON BELIEVES THAT ANY TRADE OFF OF CRUISE MISSILE

RANGE IN RETURN FOR BACKFIRE POSITIONING OR PERFORMANCE
WOULD BE AGAINST THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

2. WE HAVE PREPARED A NON-SUBSTANTIVE REPLY FOR H SIGNATURE.
YOU WILL RECALL THAT YOU HAVE AGREED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE
SYMINGTON SUBCOMMITTEE TO DISCUSS SALT COMPLIANCE.

3. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU APPROVE THE LETTER FOR BOB MCCLOSKEY'S
SIGNATURE IN PARA 4.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

4. PROPOSED LETTER TO SENATOR SYMINGTON QUOTE:

HONORABLE STUART SYMINGTON
UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR SENATOR SYMINGTON:

THE SECRETARY HAS ASKED ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER
OF JANUARY 15 CONCERNING THE BACKFIRE AND CRUISE MISSILE
ISSUES. HE READ YOUR LETTER BEFORE DEPARTING FOR MOSCOW
AND APPRECIATES HAVING YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE COMPLEX
ISSUES.

THE BACKFIRE AND CRUISE MISSILE ISSUES ARE THE PRINCIPAL
OUTSTANDING ISSUES WHICH REQUIRE RESOLUTION FOR ACHIEVE-
MENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE NEW SALT AGREEMENT BASED ON THE
VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDINGS. ALTHOUGH EACH OF THESE
ISSUES SHOULD BE EVALUATED IN TERMS OF ITS EFFECT ON
U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY, A NEW AGREEMENT MUST AS A WHOLE
CONTAIN THE BALANCE NEEDED TO ENHANCE STRATEGIC STABILITY
AND DETERRENCE. THE SECRETARY WENT TO MOSCOW WITH
ASSURANCES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO MODIFY THEIR
PREVIOUS PROPOSALS ON THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES, AND WE IN
TURN ARE ALSO PREPARED TO SEEK A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE
COMPROMISE.

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WE HOPE THAT THE MOSCOW TRIP WILL PRODUCE REAL MOVEMENT
TOWARD A RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

SINCERELY,

ROBERT J. MCCLOSKEY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

END QUOTE.

5. SYMINGTON'S LETTER OF JANUARY 15

QUOTE:

THE HONORABLE HENRY KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

THE MEDIA SAY YOU PLAN TO GO TO MOSCOW; AND THE LOS ANGELES TIMES HAS AN ARTICLE BY TOTH SAYING YOU PLAN TO TRADE OFF CRUISE MISSILE RANGE IN RETURN FOR BACKFIRE LIMITATIONS.

I DO NOT PRETEND TO BE AN EXPERT ON WEAPONRY, BUT FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS HAVE BEEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PLANS AND PROGRAMS INCIDENT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY; DIRECTLY SINCE 1940, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO AIRPLANES.

WHEN AS SECRETARY OF AIR I APPROVED THE FIRST PRODUCTION ORDER FOR B-52S, THE CLINCHING ARGUMENT FOR A BOMBER OF THAT SIZE AND COST WAS THE FACT IT COULD FLY SO HIGH IT WOULD BE INVULNERABLE.

NOW, BECAUSE OF RAPID AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENTS IN MISSILERY, THE HIGHER A PLANE OF THIS TYPE FLIES, THE MORE VULNERABLE IT IS; AND THE PRODUCTION COST OF THE PROPOSED NEW STRATEGIC BOMBER IS OVER TEN TIMES THE COST OF THE B-52S.

THIS IS PERTINENT, BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH THE UNITED STATES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOULD BE SURE TO HAVE WHAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL THE SECURITY POSSIBLE IN THIS NUCLEAR AGE, ITS FINANCIAL POSITION, ALREADY DENTED, IS ALSO VITALLY IMPORTANT TO ANY TRUE NATIONAL SECURITY.

THE CRUISE MISSILE CONCEPT IS A CONCEPT OF AN ENTIRELY NEW WEAPONS SYSTEM. OVERSIMPLIFIED, IN EFFECT, IT IS A PILOTLESS BOMBER, ONE THAT CAN TRAVEL THOUSANDS OF MILES AT HIGH OR LOW ALTITUDE; A WEAPON THAT CAN BE BUILT AT BUT A SMALL FRACTION OF THE COST OF A MANNED BOMBER.

AS WE SEE IT, ANY AGREEMENT TO HOLD DOWN ITS RANGE WOULD BE THEORETICAL. WITHOUT ON SITE INSPECTION, HOW COULD NE MEASURE RANGE WITH ACCURACY.

THE BACKFIRE BOMBER WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE A RANGE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE FB-111 AND THE B-52. EXCEPT THROUGH REFUELING OR/AND ONE-WAY MISSIONS, IT IS NOT AN INTERCONTINENTAL BOMBER AS THAT TERM IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD. SUCH A

PLANE ALSO FACES THE GROWING DANGER OF DESTRUCTION FROM MISSILES OF MANY TYPES, A DANGER WHICH IN VARYING DEGREES NOW FACES ALL PLANES, SURFACE SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND LAND WEAPONS.

BASED ON THE ABOVE, I BELIEVE ANY "TRADE-OFF" OF CRUISE MISSILE RANGE IN RETURN FOR BACKFIRE POSITIONING OR PERFORMANCE WOULD BE AGAINST THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

WITH EVERY GOOD WISH,

SINCERELY,

STUART SYMINGTON

END QUOTE.

6. DRAFTED: PM/DCA:HDCAMITTA:1/21/76
CLEARANCES: C - MR. KELLY, INR/STA - MR. SAVITT,
S/P - MR. ZEMACH, AND H - MR. JENKINS.
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Message Attributes

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To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
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